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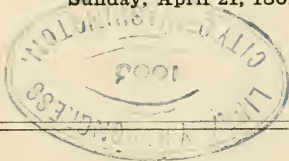
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Loyalty to Government.

title
SERMON

BY
John ✓
REV. J. P. LUNDY, //

PREACHED AT
EMANUEL CHURCH,
HOLMESBURG,

Sunday, April 21, 1861.



PHILADELPHIA:
LINDSAY & BLAKISTON.

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SUBMISSION TO CIVIL AUTHORITY.

Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the king as supreme, or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well.—
1 PETER ii. 13 and 14.

The Family, the State and the Church, stand in mutual relation to one another, as God's ordinances, for the good of man in society. The family, coeval with the creation of the human race, is a divine institution for the preservation of our species in the earth, and is the foundation of both State and Church. Its office, furthermore, is to guard, protect, and train the race during the period of helpless infancy and youth, in order that it may be fitted for the duties of that manhood which is to be spent in the service of State and Church. Moreover, it is the home of the affections, sympathies, kindness, and all the tender attributes of our nature, where all these are developed and nurtured. The State is but the expansion of the Family, in the sense of

being a social compact for the common good. Its office is to protect its subjects in life, property and reputation, as well from internal rebellion as from external oppression. It is, therefore, the safeguard of the church, and loyalty to the State is not only a Christian duty, but a matter of the highest interest. Inasmuch as all government is from God for the good of the governed, so it is plain that submission to the lawful authority of the land is a matter which concerns the conscience and the welfare of every citizen. National existence depends just as much for its continuance upon the principles of equity and justice on the part of rulers, and of submission and obedience on the part of the people, as individual existence does on an observance of the laws of life and health. The State, therefore, has a life peculiar to itself, which must be protected from assault, either on the part of external enemies or of internal traitors. The Church, as the Family, deriving outward protection from the State, is that spiritual compact instituted for the honor of God, in which communities and individuals are trained for another state of being. Its office is to minister to spiritual necessities, and to protect our spiritual interests. The Family welcomes our new existence into the world, and cares for its necessitous help-

lessness ; the State secures the welfare of our social life ; and the Church prepares for eternal life hereafter, while it also ministers to the good of the life that now is. And submission to every ordinance of man, in the Family, in the State, and in the Church, is a duty prescribed by the Christian religion, and enjoined upon all children, all citizens, and all baptized persons—a duty to parents and guardians, to rulers, to bishops and pastors. Neglect of this duty on the part of children is disobedience ; on the part of citizens, treason and crime ; on the part of church members, it is sin and wickedness, heresy and schism. As it is characteristic of good children to observe the laws of the household and of the school, so it is characteristic of good citizens to observe the laws of the State, and of good christians to maintain their loyalty to Christ and the church.

The service of this day, in its Epistle, calls upon us more especially to consider the duty which Christians owe to the State or nation of which they form a part. And in times of such popular tumult and excitement as the present, when this great nation is divided in its allegiance to the general government under which we live, and thousands are on the one side preparing for its defence, and on the other for

its destruction, it is of the utmost importance that every American Christian should know and do his duty. Forms of government and administrations of government are matters of choice; but government itself is of God, and cannot be disannulled or destroyed by men. It is no more a matter of choice than the divine institution of the family; and hence it is the duty of God's people to be true and loyal to whatever government it is that gives them protection, and under which they live.

When St. Peter wrote his Epistle to his fellow Christians scattered throughtout the Roman empire; Nero, the worst of tyrants and the basest of men, was on the throne, by whose order St. Paul was beheaded at Rome (A. D. 66), and who, to enjoy the spectacle of a great fire, set Rome in a blaze, and then charged his own diabolical act upon the Christians, as a pretext for a general persecution against them. His governors were in the distant provinces where those Christians were to whom St. Peter sent his first Epistle, enjoining upon them submission to this iniquitous Emperor and his representatives. A prejudice against Christians then existed in the public mind of the heathen that they were opposed to the Roman government, simply because they took no part in idolatrous spectacles

and games. Refusing to pay divine honours to the images of the Emperor was construed into treason; and the necessity of holding their religious assemblages at night, and in secret places, was perverted into a design to form plots and conspiracies against the government. If they never appeared in the amphitheatre to witness the cruel sport of gladiators killing one another, and fighting with wild beasts, for the amusement of the populace, it was charged upon them that they were morose and singular, and despised the generous policy of the government in providing these delightful spectacles. The Nazarene Pretender, whom they called their Lord and King, had been hung on a cross in Jerusalem, for treason, under Pontius Pilate; Paul and Silas were mobbed in Thessalonica at the instigation of the envious Jews, who brought against these servants of the Lord Jesus the accusation that they and their fellow Christians "all did contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying, that there is another king, one Jesus" (Acts xvii., 7); an accusation of conspiracy against the government so plausible, yet so groundless, that the rulers of the city were alarmed and the people agitated, so that the brethren of Paul and Silas sent them away by night, to avoid danger and tumult; nay, it was a common preju-

dice in those times that all Christians were traitors, and hence the exhortation of submission and loyalty to established government so frequently given in the Apostolic writings. "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation" (Rom. xiii., 1). "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work (Titus iii., 1). "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake." "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's." All this Christian duty of submission to the constituted authority of the land—all this duty of loyalty to the government under which we live, is too plain for argument. It was urged upon Christians in Apostolic times, so as to disarm the groundless prejudice that existed against their religion and themselves, and so as to spare them in its observance from needless persecution and death. There can be no question now as to the obligation resting upon every Christian to observe the laws and to respect the authority of his country. It is equally binding now as in Apostolic times. It is a

duty equally imperative under President Lincoln as under the Emperor Nero. To neglect it is not only treason against the U. S. government, but rebellion against God. The only questions that can arise as to this important duty are, what is the reason of it, and what is the extent of it? or, in other words, *why* ought we to obey the civil authority, and *how far* ought we to obey it?

The answer to the first question, why submission is due to civil government, is mainly because God so wills and orders it. This He does in the plainest language, and in the most direct manner. None, but a fool or a madman would presume to question it for a moment. As government in society at large is but the expansion of government in the family, so the fifth commandment of the Decalogue, enjoining obedience to parents, also implies obedience to magistrates and all in authority, civil and ecclesiastical. And as government on earth is but the imperfect exponent of government in Heaven; as men in authority are the representatives of the King eternal, immortal and invisible, so obedience to lawful government is obedience to God, without which no creature can prosper and no order can be maintained. Without it society dissolves into a wild chaos, and all institutions for the good of men

perish. It is therefore God's will that Christians submit to the constituted, recognized and lawful authority of the land in which they live. Usurpation of power for ambitious purposes; treasonable attempts to overthrow government are to be rebuked, resisted, in obedience to the will of God. Kings may be tyrants, like Nero, or administrations of government may not be in accordance with the wishes and opinions of many, and yet the duty is plain that no Christian may raise hand or voice, or use his influence against the government itself. It is high time that as a people we began to understand that God is sovereign, and not ourselves. Political leaders and orators have so long sought place and power through the delusive flattery of the dear sovereign people, that they have come to believe that authority in governmental matters really does rest with them; whereas the plain truth is, that all authority and power in the state, as in the church, are of God. We are taught in our Bibles that "Promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from *the south*. (!) But God is Judge: He putteth down one, and setteth up another (Ps. lxxv, 6 and 7). "The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will" (Dan. iv., 25). Jesus said

to Pilate, "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above" (John xix., 11). And if submission even unto death on the part of the Lord Jesus to that Roman jurisdiction in Palestine, which Almighty God established for wise purposes, was characteristic of His most holy life, surely insubordination to the supreme authority of this or any land can not be the characteristic of His people. Obedience to government is obedience to God, due from all people.

But again, in this connection it may be remarked, that the will of God is not arbitrary in establishing government, and requiring submission to it. God has established all government for human good, and it is the *interest* as well as the duty of the people to submit to it. They thereby are enabled to lead quiet and peaceable lives, and to enjoy the varied good for which government was instituted. Disaffection and disobedience somewhere, have now set this nation in a blaze of civil war; and the people of this land, long blessed with peace and prosperity, but forgetful alike of their own interest and of their duty to God, are now rushing to arms, that havoc, slaughter and desolation may teach them and their posterity, the one absolute necessity of submission to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake.

The other question as to how far this obedience is to go, or what is its extent, is easily answered. To God the submission is absolute. To the State it is limited and regulated by the law of God. To man as His representative in authority, it is conditional upon a faithful representation and defence of those eternal principles of equity and justice, on which all governments are founded. It is not a question as to which form of government is best, whether monarchical or republican; for as to the best forms of government men will differ, and the form of government best adapted to one country, may not be suitable in another; but it is a question as to whether the government under which we now live is to be maintained, and to what extent. Men adapt the principles of government to their circumstances in republics and monarchies, as guided in their choice by the wisdom from above; but men do not and cannot disannul the principles themselves, because they are of God. The extent, therefore, to which submission is due to forms of government or administrations of the same, is the full extent of their maintenance of the principles which underlie government, and to the full extent in which they secure the object for which government was instituted, viz., the general good of the governed. To

administer any government in such a way as that all shall be satisfied of the equity and justice of it, is no easy task. To rule in such a manner as that all shall experience an equal amount of good, is an impossibility. Must government be destroyed, then, when a portion of the people are dissatisfied? No. Let them petition for a redress of grievances. Is revolution justifiable when a small faction dislike chosen and lawfully constituted authority? No. Let them patiently wait for a change, or by lawful means seek to make one. Revolution is the last dreadful alternative of effecting a change of government, when government ceases utterly to answer the ends for which it was instituted, when it disregards all justice and equity, and its ministry is only that of evil. Is rebellion ever justifiable? No. For there are other and better ways of securing the good for which governments exist. It is never lawful to do evil that good may come. It is too easy and common a thing to abuse and denounce those in authority; but let such as are given to this, remember the difficulty of the position, and that if they themselves occupied it, they would probably do no better. If those in power would rule in the fear of God, remembering that, like as mountains are elevated above the surrounding country only that they may

purify the air and condense the vapors, so as to give health and refreshment to the vallies below, so they are exalted to dispense good to those under them; and if the governed would only learn to praetise the duty of obedience and submission in a meek and quiet spirit, there would be no wars and rumors of wars to disturb society as now; there would be as now no disruption of States to shake the fabric of society to its centre as with the shock of an earthquake. When these mutual relations of rulers and people are disturbed, then the State is set on a blaze of war, like that of Abimelech's conspiracy, when fire came out from Abimelech, and devoured the men of Shechem, and the house of Millo; and when fire came out from the men of Shechem, and from the house of Millo, and devoured Abimelech. Two hostile parties arrayed in deadly civil strife, would destroy each other, until God decided the contest. If I be asked to what extent the government under which we live is to be obeyed and maintained, I answer for myself, after some little observation of governments in the Old World, it must be obeyed by all with heart and soul, cheerfully and loyally; and it must be maintained to the last dollar of the purse, and to the last drop of blood in the veins of the last man capable of defending it.

When amid the dangers and hardships of travel in foreign lands, where barbarous Turk and wily Arab make you tremble at the insecurity of life, you feel as never before, under God, what safety there is in a government whose power extends thus far for your protection. With tearful joy do you hail the flag of freedom floating over the houses of your country's ministers and consuls in Alexandria, in Jerusalem, in Beyrout, in Constantinople, everywhere; and you feel on those distant shores that to be an American citizen is no empty boast, and that the ensign of the nation's power, and glory and greatness, is something that must be kept waving round the world forever. And now, and here at home, has this flag a meaning and a significance that it has never had in our eyes before. That men, calling themselves American citizens, should anywhere on this soil wet by the blood of the Revolution, fire upon that flag, and tear it down from its place in heaven, is a thing so monstrous, as to be beyond the possibility of comprehending it. Submit to the domain and the dominion which it shelters, for the Lord's sake. If not for the sake of the government itself as now administered, yet for the Lord's sake—for the sake of the oppressed humanity that He came to make free—for the sake of

posterity and the good of His church, submit to it, even in its call to arms for its defence. It is worth preserving. It is worth fighting for. God calls us to its rescue from rebellion. The Lord speed the conflict to a righteous issue. If our submission must be unto death, as the Lord's was to the Roman government, so be it. Life is dearly bought by treachery. The path of glory is the path of conflict in a good cause.

The government must be maintained, because God so wills it, and because it is our dearest interest to do so. The government has not ceased its good to our people, nor is it without some justice and equity in its administration; therefore, it must not yet be revolutionized and changed. If in tears, poverty, toil, privation, and in the din of battle, and the blood of the slain, any of us must submit to it for the Lord's sake, let us accept the sacrifice like men going to a holy sacrament, solemnly, determinedly, and in a spirit of heroic love.



TRAITOR, SPARE THAT FLAG.

Adaptation of "Woodman, spare that Tree."

TRAITOR! spare that flag!
Touch not a single star!
Its shelt'ring glory now,
Still blazes near and far.
'Twas our forefather's hand
That placed it o'er our head;
And thou shalt let it stand
Or perish with the dead.

That dear old precious flag,
Whose glory and renown
Are spread o'er land and sea,
And would'st thou tear it down?
Traitor, forbear thy touch!
Cut not its heart-bound ties!
Oh, spare that glorious flag,
Still streaming through the skies!

When I was yet a boy,
I gloried in the sight,
And raised my voice in joy
To greet its folds of light;
For it my home is dear,
Dear is my native land;
Forgive this foolish tear,
But let that old Flag stand.

My heart strings round thee cling,
Close as thy stripes old friend;
Thy glory men shall sing,
Till time itself shall end;
Old flag, th' storm still brave,
And traitor, leave the spot,
While I've a hand to save,
Thy touch shall harm it not.

J P L.

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